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STATEMENT OF PLAN

FOR REARRANGEMENT OF

COPLEY SQUARE

BY

C. HOWARD WALKER



BOSTON
MUNICIPAL PRINTING OFFICE
1907



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REARRANGEMENT OF COPLEY SQUARE.

In the year 1892 there was a rumor that a design for the embellishment of Copley square was contemplated in which would be incorporated a number of equestrian statues. The Boston Society of Architects considered that any such contemplated scheme should receive careful attention, and instituted a competition amongst its members and other architects for this project, and appointed Prof. F. W. Chandler and Mr. E. M. Wheelwright as judges. There were a number of designs submitted, and the design placed first by Mr. C. Howard Walker was in all important respects the one now under consideration.

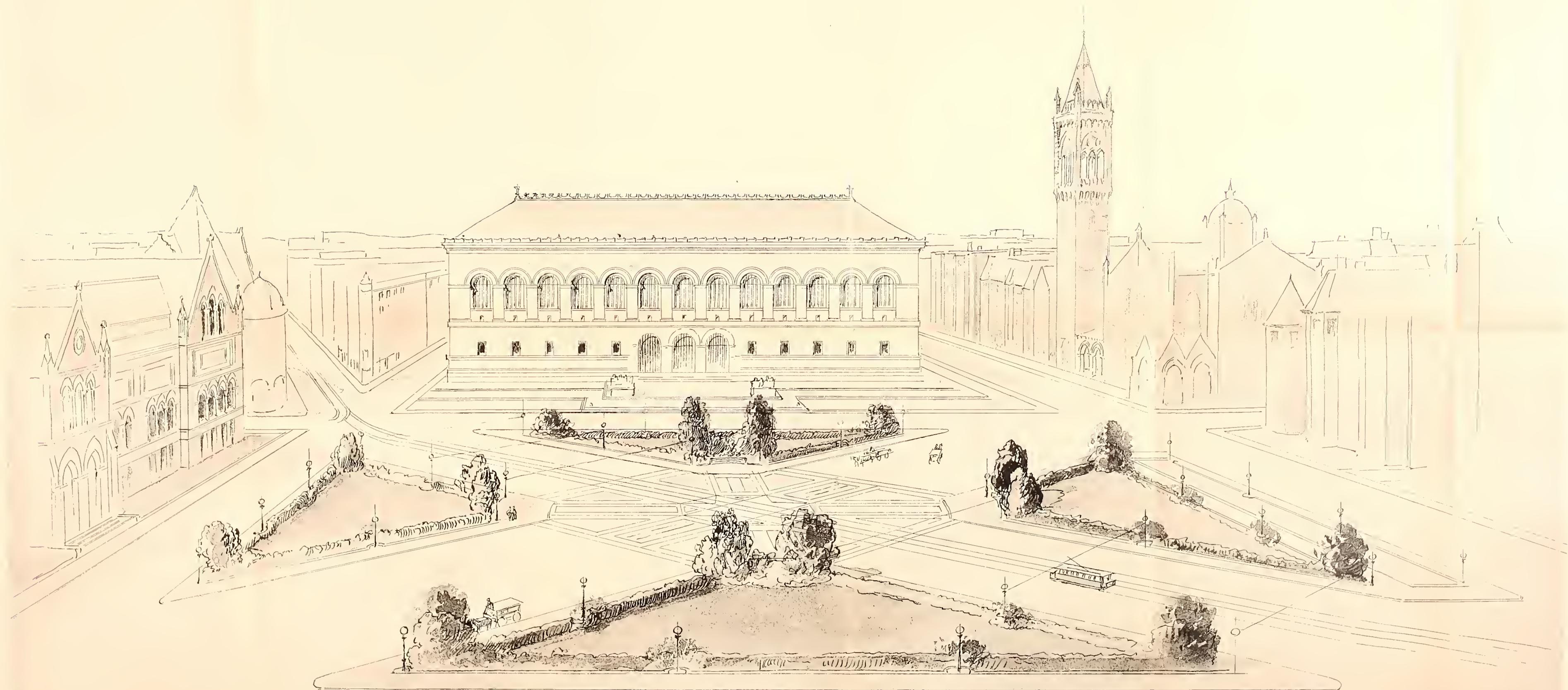
There was a design by Mr. Arthur Rotch placed second, in which a sunken garden occupied the centre of the square, which was extremely attractive, but, in the opinion of the judges, interfered with direct lines of traffic across the square. The character of this design, however, so commended itself to the Society of Architects that they desired a sort of referendum in regard to the merits of the designs, and all were placed on exhibition in the Art Club Gallery, and visitors expressed their choice by ballot. By this popular vote Mr. Rotch's design was placed first and Mr. Walker's second, and both architects were instructed to collaborate and produce a design incorporating, if possible, the best ideas of each, an extremely difficult task, as the two designs were of absolutely different character. Various attempts were made both before and after the death of Mr. Rotch, and finally the sunken garden was abandoned because of the original objection, *i. e.*, that it interrupted circulation, and the first design reappeared with slight changes. The entire conception of this design was influenced by the desire

to make the square symmetrical in plan, with its axes coincident with those of the Library and the Museum of Fine Arts, and to provide planted areas which should indicate this intention, at the same time that they created direct avenues for traffic, both around and across the square.

The idea of paving the entire square was abandoned on account of radiation of heat and the annoyance from dust from so large a surface, and also that so large an area without islands for the protection of pedestrians from vehicles crossing in all directions is inadvisable. The paving of the avenues proposed across the square may be made in patterns to further increase the effect of the surface.

The treatment of the triangular spaces in Copley square requires, in addition to the grassed area, a careful selection of shrubs and small trees grouped at the angles of the spaces. These are not to be of a height to obstruct the views of either the Public Library or of Trinity Church, but sufficiently high to accent the boundaries of the triangles and to increase the effect of distances. The trees are not to be isolated, but the foliage is to be massed and form backgrounds or whatever ornamentation of the square may be desired, whether of seats, fountains, or decorated sculpture. Contrasts of low masses of foliage of rounded silhouette with the vertical lines of other trees is desirable. The selection and disposition of such masses require careful attention, both on account of the profiles of the trees and the variation of their color. Hawthorn, rhododendrons, and others with equally low spreading masses can be contrasted with those having a more vertical character. It is probable that flower beds will be undesirable.

The intention of the treatment of the square is twofold: First, to bring it into symmetrical relation with the buildings around it, and to announce that relation not only in plan, but in appearance in perspective, and to define the lines of the transit of all vehicles across the square; in fact, to determine the lines of circulation within its boundaries, so that they may not be of so great an area that there is danger to pedestrians in crossing. To properly announce the formal disposition of the axes and the enclosed spaces, something

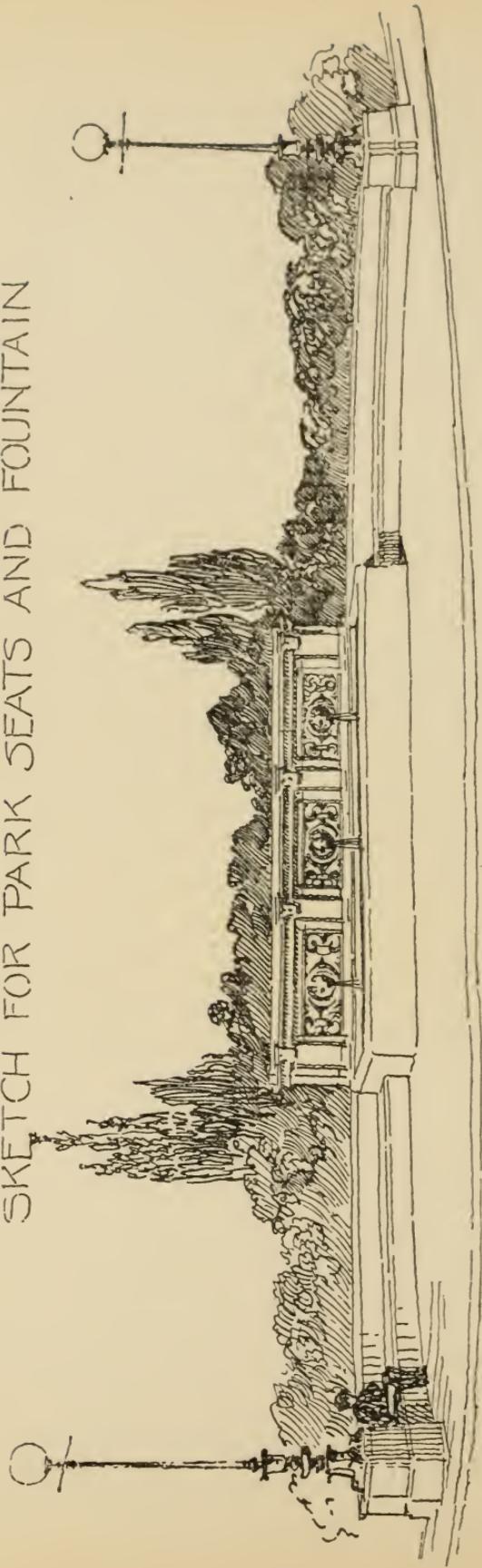


C. Howard Walker

ROUGH DRAWING OF COPEY SQUARE UNDER THE SCHEME OF BETTERMENT PROPOSED BY C. HOWARD WALKER

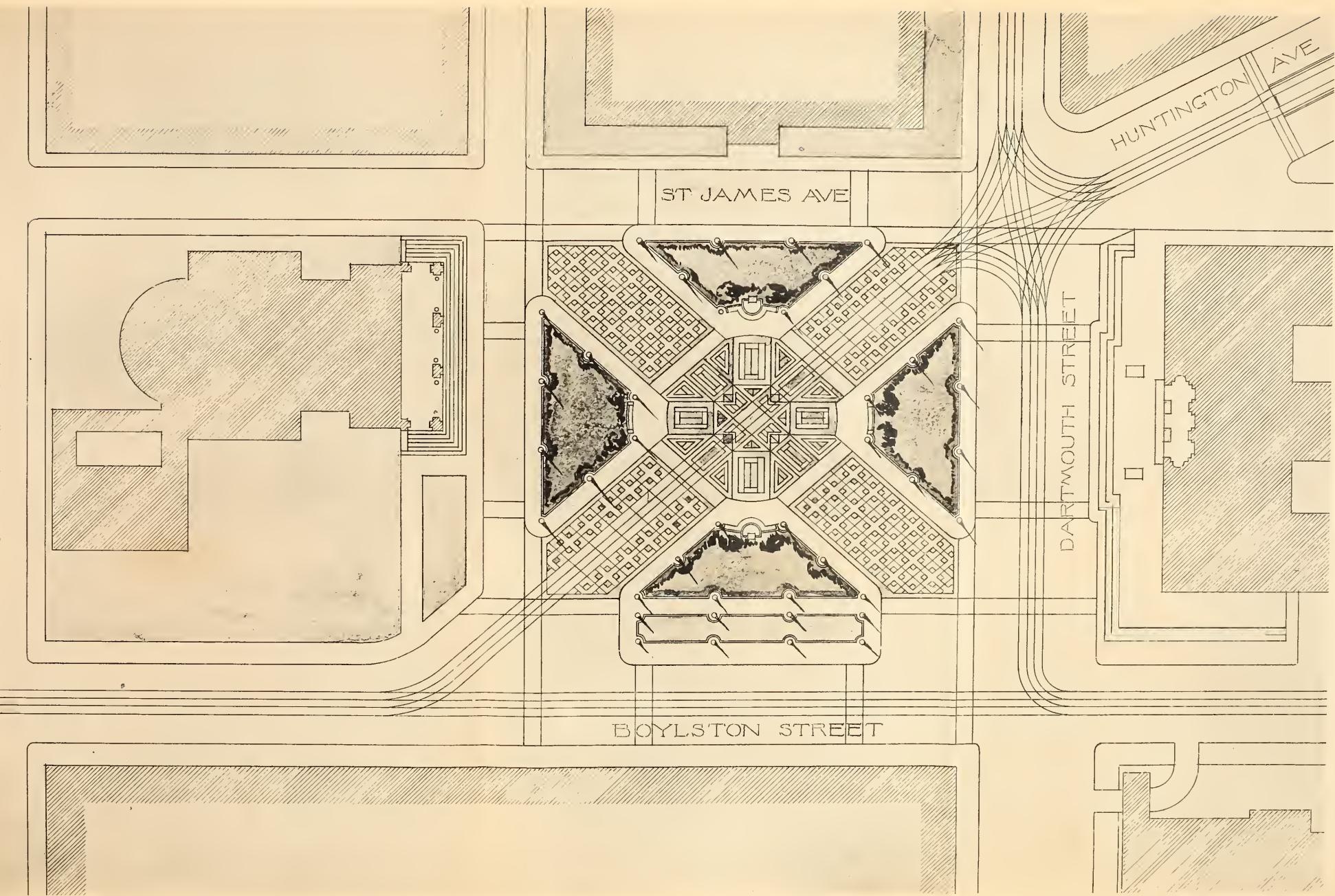
more than flat surface treatment is essential, either by balustrades and monumental lamps or by masses of foliage, and if possible by all three. And to avoid the confusion arising from the transit in all directions of vehicles across a large area, certain portions must be protected to afford refuge to pedestrians, and these portions have been arranged symmetrically to enhance the effect of the square and of its surrounding buildings.

SKETCH FOR PARK SEATS AND FOUNTAIN



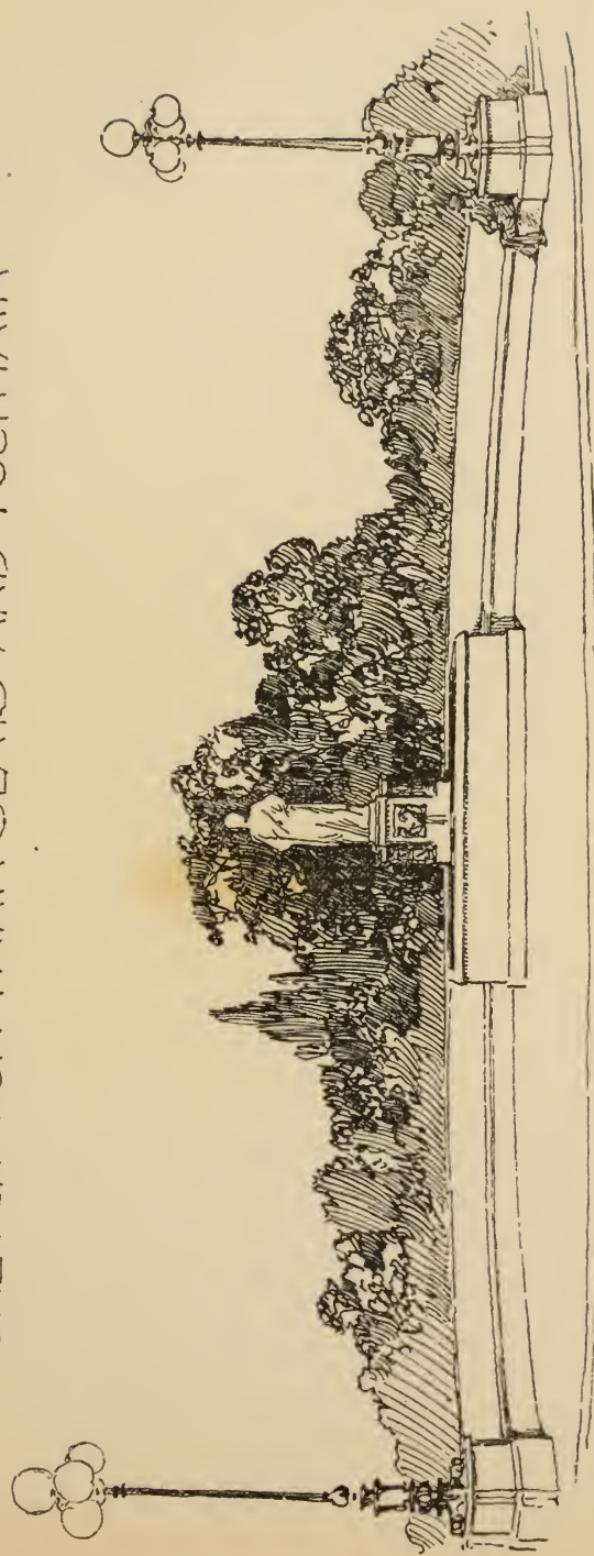
Howard Hopper Smith

CLARENDON ST



STREET ARRANGEMENT, COPELTON SQUARE, UNDER THE PROPOSED PLANS OF BETTERMENT BY C. HOWARD WALKER.

SKETCH FOR PARK SEATS AND FOUNTAIN



C. Howard Hulet

BOSTON, November 15, 1905.

JAMES BEAUMONT NOYES, Esq. :

DEAR SIR,—I send you copy of correspondence with Mayor Quincy in 1898 and 1899, relating to a plan for the laying out of Copley square. The Art Commission at that time recommended a plan, the original of which is on file at the City Hall, and a blue print of which (under date of March 25, 1899) is herewith forwarded.

There is also an estimate of the expense of the carrying out of this plan, made by Albert A. Libby & Co., 12 Federal street, dated February 18, 1899, copy of which is also enclosed.

In addition, I may say that I called the matter to the attention of the present Art Commissioners at their last meeting, held November 13; and while no formal action was taken, they intimated informally an approval of a rearrangement on the general lines shown by the blue print. The triangular spaces are to be planted with trees or shrubs.

The original correspondence is on file at the City Hall.

I should like this blue print back when you are through with it.

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

SAMUEL D. WARREN,

Chairman Art Commission.

BOSTON, October 25, 1898.

ARTHUR A. CAREY, Esq.,

Secretary Board of Art Commissioners:

DEAR SIR,—I have given more or less attention at different times to the matter of laying out Copley square in some different and more artistic manner. As you may be aware, a plan for this purpose was prepared two or three years ago, and I think that your fellow-member, Mr. Walker, had something to do with it. I have understood, also, from Mr. Prince, President Public Library Trustees, that some architect had prepared another plan of a less expensive character to carry out for their Board. I should like very much to see something done on this matter next spring and the appropriation obtained from the new Board of Apportionment which will meet in January or February. As this is really an artistic question and therefore comes within the general scope of

the duties of your Board, if not within its legal powers, I desire to ask your Board to familiarize itself with what has heretofore been proposed, and to take up this matter and make some definite recommendation to me, with plans and, if possible, estimates.

Yours respectfully,

JOSIAH QUINCY,

Mayor.

BOSTON, February 18, 1899.

Messrs. WALKER & KIMBALL:

GENTLEMEN, — We estimate the cost of paving Copley square to be forty-seven (47) thousand dollars. This includes a double row of North River flagging around the square, eight (8) catch-basins and all filling necessary for a crown of two (2) feet.

We also estimate the cost of the edgestones, circular edge-stones and the walks laid with granolithic pavement, the sum of four (4) thousand dollars. This does not include any catch-basins that may be necessary, which may be built at a cost of one (1) hundred dollars each; nor does it include any gutters, which may be laid at a cost of one (1) dollar per linear foot, three (3) feet and six (6) inches wide.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

ALBERT A. LIBBY & Co.

ART COMMISSION,

64 Pemberton Sq.

BOSTON, April 10, 1899.

THE HON. JOSIAH QUINCY,

Mayor of the City of Boston:

DEAR SIR, — I beg to inform you that at their meeting this afternoon the Art Commission passed the following vote:

“ Voted, That, in response to a letter from His Honor the Mayor, dated October 25, 1898, the plan heretofore considered by the Commission for parking Copley square be recommended for execution.”

Respectfully yours,

ARTHUR A. CAREY,

Secretary.

On June 8, 1906, Mr. Walker's plan for the betterment of Copley square was formally presented to His Honor Mayor John F. Fitzgerald, by the Executive Committee and other members of the Metropolitan Improvement League. The committee approving, commending, and urgently requesting the final adoption of Mr. Walker's plan, subject to the approval of the Art Commission in the City of Boston, consisted of Robert Apthorp Boit, President; George Howland Cox, Secretary; Sylvester Baxter, Meyer Bloomfield, J. R. Coolidge, Jr., Charles E. Fay, James J. Storrow, and James B. Noyes. Frederick L. Olmsted, a member of the Executive Committee of the League, and Hon. Josiah Quincy, while unable to be present to meet the Mayor, expressed their entire approval in the plan for the proposed betterment of Copley square. The League, by the members present, included representatives from the Twentieth Century Club, Boston Society of Architects, Massachusetts Civic League, and unofficially the Museum of Fine Arts. One of the League's self-imposed duties is to encourage and safeguard the physical growth of Boston as a metropolitan community along well-considered and well-planned lines, that shall assure the largest possible measure of convenient and artistic development.

The Copley-square betterment seemed a singularly proper opportunity for endeavor by the League. Its list of members include:

Life Members: I. Tucker Burr, Arthur A. Carey.

Members: Mrs. Jere. Abbott, Charles Francis Adams, 2d, Robert Day Andrews, S. Read Anthony, Francis Henry Appleton, Samuel Appleton, Lewis A. Armistead, William A. Bancroft, Sylvester Baxter, E. Pierson Beebe, Francis Blake, John Balch Blood, Meyer Bloomfield, Robert Apthorp Boit, Louis D. Brandeis, Edward M. Brewer, S. Brooks, John A. Burnham, Harry L. Burrage, Alfred E. Burton, Alfred D. Chandler, Walter G. Chase, Stephen Child, William W. Churchill, M. L. Cobb, James M. Codman, Jr., Richard Codman, Charles A. Coolidge, J. Randolph Coolidge, J. R. Coolidge, Jr., John T. Coolidge, George Howland Cox, George G. Crocker, Charles P. Curtis, C. H. Dalton, Samuel

B. Dana, Frank A. Day, DeSales Doonan, George B. Dorr, William Howe Downes, J. Sumner Draper, Charles W. Eliot, William Endicott, Jr., Arthur F. Estabrook, Charles E. Fay, Frank M. Ferrin, Edward W. Forbes, J. Murray Forbes, Percival Gallagher, George A. Gardner, Edwin Ginn, Edward Glines, William R. Gray, Irving T. Guild, Augustus Hemenway, Edwin A. Hills, Joshua B. Holden, Frederic B. Holder, Robert C. Hooper, Clement S. Houghton, Charles W. Hubbard, William C. Hunneman, William Jackson, Arthur S. Johnson, Walcott H. Johnson, Stillman F. Kelley, David P. Kimball, Charles A. King, Rosewell B. Lawrence, William Lawrence, Joseph Lee, Henry Lefavour, John Mason Little, A. W. Longfellow, William Caleb Loring, A. Lawrence Lowell, Frederick E. Lowell, Guy Lowell, Warren H. Manning, Laurence Minot, F. S. Moseley, R. Neagle, James B. Noyes, Frederick L. Olmsted, Jr., Robert Treat Paine, William A. Paine, Herbert Parker, Frank E. Peabody, Robert S. Peabody, S. Endicott Peabody, D. L. Pickman, Wallace L. Pierce, William Taggard Piper, Thomas G. Plant, Laban Pratt, Henry H. Proctor, Josiah Quincy, Charles S. Rackemann, William H. Richardson, S. W. Rodman, Denman W. Ross, George O. Sears, Herbert M. Sears, William T. Sedgwick, Philip P. Sharples, F. C. Shattuck, David N. Skillings, Alvin F. Sortwell, Frederic P. Stearns, R. H. Stearns, James J. Storrow, R. Clipston Sturgis, J. G. Thorp, George B. Upham, F. H. Viaux, Arthur W. Walker, C. Howard Walker, Grant Walker, J. Collins Warren, Samuel D. Warren, Leslie C. Wead, Andrew Gray Weeks, George Wigglesworth.

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